UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/C.2/1993/NGO/3
25 March 1993

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON NON-GOVERNMENTAL
ORGANIZATIONS
22 March-2 April 1993
Agenda item 2

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

Statement submitted by the International Chamber of Commerce, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

* * *

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC - the world business organization - is an international non-governmental organization which has enjoyed category I consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1946. The ICC feels that this relationship has been a mutually beneficial one. It is a relationship which it values highly and which it wishes to enhance and strengthen in response to recent expressions of interest, by both Governments and the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in a greater contribution by non-governmental organizations to the work of the Organization in such areas as sustainable development.

The ICC has noted the decision taken by the Economic and Social Council at its organizational session for 1993, in conjunction with the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development and its rules of procedure, to undertake a general review of the overall arrangements for consultations with non-governmental organizations which are set forth in Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

To the extent that the underlying rationale for this decision is based on a desire by the Council to pursue a more open attitude towards the non-governmental community, the ICC would like to affirm that it believes that

the United Nations should be open to truly representative non-governmental organizations as broadly as possible. We also recognize that the circumstances in which Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) was adopted have changed and that it may be timely to consider whether certain modifications should be made. At the same time, we feel that the review should basically look to expanding the substantive involvement of the non-governmental sector in the work of the United Nations, particularly of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies.

As the World Federation of United Nations Associations has put it in its statement to the Committee, the process should have as its fundamental objective the expansion of the participatory rights and privileges of non-governmental organizations rather than their limitation, as may result from the operation of the rules adopted for the participation of non-governmental organizations in the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

We believe that the basic rules embodied in Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) still have validity and should not be done away with if the United Nations and the non-governmental community are to derive maximum benefit from the consultative process. In particular, the very real distinction between non-governmental organizations that are truly global in scope and that represent important constituencies with broad concerns and those with a limited membership and a narrow focus is fundamental. Placing all non-governmental organizations, regardless of representativity and range of concerns, on the same level would not make the consultative process a more efficient one.

In this connection, it may be useful to recall that the ICC is a genuinely global organization with members in 130 countries, North and South, industrialized and developing, and in transition to a market economy. This world-wide representation of the private sector is reflected in the composition of the ICC governing body - its Council - where 31 of the 59 countries which make up the Council are members of the Group of 77. And the Presidency of the ICC rotates among countries of both North and South; the current President is a well-known Indian businessman.

The ICC wishes to cooperate fully with the Committee and the Economic and Social Council during the re-examination of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) and stands ready to be an active participant in that process. Our approach to this re-examination will be motivated by a desire to help make the consultative relationship more effective and meaningful. We would hope that, in any case, our views would be taken into account as the re-examination moves forward.

Finally, the ICC would hope that the responsibilities in support of the relationship between non-governmental organizations and the United Nations of the Non-Governmental Organizations Unit in the Secretariat, which we understand will now be part of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, will be reaffirmed.